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**Understanding Reactions to Advocacy Advertising
Through Sentiment Analysis**

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Abstract

Understanding Reactions to Advocacy Advertising Through Sentiment Analysis

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This thesis introduces a new measure to evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy advertisements to generate audience sentiment. While more traditional ads focus primarily on products, there is an increasing trend toward ads that focus on advocacy or specific stances related to public policy and political issues. Although they can be topical and attention-getting, advocacy ads also carry inherent risks such as eliciting contention from those with opposite stances and potentially offending members of the existing consumer base. In short, the ads can generate negative, rather than positive audience sentiment. Of further interest related to this phenomenon is the amplification of the resulting sentiment via social media channels. In this study, I use content analysis and audience sentiment analysis, a big data technique of machine learning and natural language processing, to explore online responses to the implicit and explicit messages present in sampled advocacy ads. The study finds that advocacy ads can be a feasible way to communicate the socially responsible aspects of a corporation, but the strategy needs to be conducted properly to arouse positive, rather than negative, sentiment.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Super Bowl is a platform that elicits much attention toward product-centered advertising content and much buzz (on and offline) about the ads during and after the event. Interestingly, during the 2017 Super Bowl, several companies strategically chose to focus on advocacy advertising. While this corporate advertising strategy has existed since the 1930s, the content of modern advocacy ads is moving from a focus on industry-related messages, such as those used defensively in times of corporate crisis, to a more proactive and voluntary approach that invokes contentious public issues that are not obviously relevant to the corporation's brand identity. This shift is interesting if only because of its inherent risks, which can include widespread contention among spectators and advertising critics. In other words, brands are voluntarily courting controversy with little research evidence to date about the impact of the strategy on consumer sentiment. This study seeks to illuminate that impact empirically. The theoretical framework of corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory provide a framework for this effort. Furthermore, this study introduces a new method to measure ad effectiveness via sentiment analysis, identifies the kinds of attitudinal feedback that advocacy-based ads elicit from audiences, and explores how brands might more effectively develop politically focused ads in terms of content that is more likely to elicit positive sentiment online. Simply put, the current research utilizes content analysis as well as social media analytics and machine learning techniques to evaluate online audience sentiment toward politically controversial advertisements.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents an overview of recent developments in corporate advocacy advertising, describes the theoretical framework of Corporate Social Responsibility and stakeholder theory, and introduces a measure of audience sentiment to evaluate the effectiveness advocacy advertising.

Corporate advocacy advertising defined

Corporate advertising is either commercial or institutional (Waltzer, 1988). Commercial advertising involves the direct promotion of a firm's goods/services to create markets and increase sales. Its purpose is more economic, with content centered on the product itself. In contrast, institutional advertising aims to create a favorable perception among key stakeholders/consumers (Bromley, 1993; Fombrun, 1996; Ginzler et al., 1993; Schumann et al., 1991). Such advertisements, often considered a controversial form of communication, move beyond the traditional realm of directly selling the firm's products; instead, they present the firm as a responsible corporate citizen, with a record of performance based on values that serve the community. Institutional advertising can be broken down into imagery and advocacy advertising.

Imagery advertising is less controversial than advocacy advertising, because it is designed to create favorable opinions of the firm by building name recognition and identifying the firm with worthy (non-controversial) values (Sethi, 1979; Waltzer, 1988). For instance, imagery advertising usually highlights corporate acts of goodwill and public service, such as cooperating with Red Cross, contributing to Library Week, restoring the Statue of Liberty, or participating in famine relief projects. Ads may also feature inspiring personalities, like successful Olympic athletes and individuals who triumph over adversity. Compared to this approach, advocacy advertising is more likely to generate controversy. It moves from promotion of an image, to efforts designed to

influence a legislative outcome or a public policy debate (e.g., Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Nelson, 1984; Sinclair & Irani, 2005; Miller 2010).

Early research on advocacy advertising (Sethi, 1977a) defined the phenomenon as “being concerned with the propagation of ideas and the elucidation of controversial social issues of public importance. It does so in a manner such that it supports the position and interests of the sponsor while expressly or implicitly downgrading the sponsor’s opponents and denying the accuracy of their facts” (p. 43). More recently (Fox, 1986), advocacy advertising has been further described as attempting to influence public opinion on issues of concern to the sponsor, whether or not the issues are presented as being controversial and whether or not the opponent’s views are mentioned, let alone downgraded or otherwise challenged. Moreover, Waltzer (1988) argues that advocacy advertising is designed to present the views of the corporation to policy decision-makers and to mass and specialized publics. These advertisements present the corporation's definition of the issue, the structure of facts and arguments, and the corporation’s preferred policy alternatives. The corporation's view of the problem and its resolution is portrayed as accurate, valid, and in the public interest. These advertisements may ignore or deny the facts, arguments, interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations of the sponsor's opponents. Advocacy advertising seeks a positive change in the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of the audience toward the sponsor's causes. In some cases, advocacy advertisements also urge people to take a specific action.

Waltzer (1988) identifies five main categories of advocacy advertising:

1. **Ideologically involved** advertising advocates for principles, such as free enterprise, liberty, democracy, and equality of opportunity. Often, businesses praise capitalism, criticize the arguments of those who challenge or oppose it, and argue against government interference with business.

2. **Corporation defense involved** advertising explains the firm's practices, positions, and profits, often in order to deflect negative publicity or criticism of the firm.
3. **Right-to-reply advertisements** respond to what the corporation believes are incomplete, inaccurate or unfair news stories. These advertorials are a form of paid "equal time."
4. **Position-taking involved** advertising expresses an explicit corporate position on public issues. The issues and the direction of their resolution may directly affect the business or the environment in which the business operates, or they may be unrelated to corporate activities. These advertorials seek to persuade the audience to accept the firm's viewpoint.
5. **Ally recruitment appeals** explicitly ask the audience not only to adopt the firm's position but also to engage in some overt supportive behavior (e.g., join an organization, write a letter to a public official, or vote for or against a specific item on a ballot).

These five categories list out what kinds of advocacy corporates usually take. In comparison, imagery ads put more emphasis on the good action corporates have taken, while advocacy ads are mainly about an advocacy or stance corporates choose to promote. While imagery and advocacy advertising are slightly different conceptually, many corporate advertisers use both and the two are usually intertwined or blurred, such as when a corporation defends its public image by doing good works under the guidance of their spirits (advocacy). In other words, imagery advertising and advocacy advertising often coincide in practice, rather than being entirely separated (Fox, 1986).

Given the definition of advocacy advertising, it is not hard to understand that engaging in advocacy advertising is risky, since by taking a stance or getting involved in contentious issues, firms risk alienating and even mobilizing stakeholders who do not agree with their views. Audiences holding different viewpoints toward an issue may express opposition to the brand,

thereby diminishing corporate profits. For example, Sears joined with victims' rights groups in 2000 to boycott the Italian clothier Benetton for its "We, On Death Row" ad campaign, which sympathetically portrayed death row inmates. The death penalty is one of the more polarizing contemporary political issues, thus, taking a clear pro-death penalty stance was certainly risky. But Sears tempered this risk by gauging its consumers' sentiment on the issue prior to announcing its decision to cancel its line of Benetton products. As its public relations director remarked, "We've had customers who have written to us indicating that they will never buy from Sears again because we are selling Benetton merchandise. Some of the e-mails we've received and some of the letters are from people who have lost loved ones to murder. And they're very upset" (Feeney, 2000). This example reveals that firms need to be extremely careful and selective about the types of initiatives that they support, favoring campaigns based on values that align with those of the firm's core stakeholders (McDonnell, 2015).

Since corporate advocacy advertising can generate controversy, why do more and more corporations continue to use it? From a crisis communication perspective, advocacy advertising may help corporations regain public trust and credibility. For instance, Mobil Oil Company issued an advocacy campaign to respond to public doubts about energy problems. However, this campaign was not effective; a public opinion survey showed that only 9% of the public considered the Mobil Oil Company to be "seriously concerned" about solving the energy problem. This brand image was still unsatisfactory, so Mobil continued on its extensive advocacy advertising campaigns, but the percentage has remained virtually unchanged since 1974 (Adkins, 1978).

In the above example, corporations create defense campaigns involuntarily in response to public concerns. However, sometimes, corporations choose advocacy advertising even if they have not been challenged by the public regard of a crisis or doubt. For instance, 84 Lumber voluntarily

launched an implicit ad which depicts sad feelings under a border wall to show its stance in the political issue even though they are not struggled in a relevant crisis. So, why do corporates still actively get politically engaged? To explain this, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theory (ST) are brought forward to help explicate the mechanism behind corporations voluntarily getting involved in contentious political issues. To some extent, both CSR and ST indicate that taking a stance might show the company cares about public issues and pays attention to the rights of specific groups of people, instead of remaining neutral or ignorant.

Corporate Social Responsibility defined

Due to concern about the deteriorating sociopolitical environment in which business operate, the public are paying more attention to businesses' roles in society and contributions to the well-being of the community. Companies are under increasing pressure to embrace corporate social responsibility (CSR) instead of just focusing on business. Not only because independent evaluations and rankings (e.g. *Fortune's* Most Admired Companies) have proliferated nowadays, making companies' performance and contributions to society more transparent and visible, but also for the reason that social responsibility is inevitable in response to scandals and controversies that have called the companies' morality into question (Pirsch et al., 2007). Further, research in this area has found a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility actions and financial performance (Rowley & Berman, 2000; Walsh et al., 2003).

From a theoretical perspective, Carroll (1979) defined corporate social responsibility as a construct that "encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (p. 500). Carroll argues that responsibilities are not only performed for the firm's sake but also for the sake of society at. This means that organizations, by virtue of their very existence, can be viewed as entering into a social contract

that obligates the corporation to take the interests of society into consideration when making decisions (Andreasen & Drumwright, 2001).

Other conceptualizations of CSR broadly define it as “actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law” (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 117), others narrowly focused on maximizing shareholder wealth (Goodpaster, 1991). These conceptual variations reflect the different degrees of responsibility ascribed to a firm beyond its role as an economic institution (Hemphill, 1997). For the current research, a wider definition of CSR is adapted and applied: corporations are socially responsible when they seek to “make a profit, obey the law, be ethical, and be a good corporate citizen” (Carroll, 1991, p. 43).

Furthermore, scholars (Pirsch et al., 2007) have identified two basic endpoints on the CSR continuum to make it more refined: institutionalized programs and promotional programs. Institutionalized CSR programs are defined as providing a comprehensive approach to CSR, attempting to fulfill a company’s social obligations across all the stakeholder groups, and touching all aspects of the company. At the other end of the spectrum, promotional programs use CSR initiatives primarily as a tool to drive product sales (Pirsch et al., 2007). Simply, promotional programs are designed to generate short-term effects such as increased immediate purchase intent, while institutional programs are designed to build more long-term customer relationships (Pirsch et al., 2007).

Rather than increasing immediate financial benefits, institutional CSR programs are most effective at increasing customer loyalty, improving attitudes toward the company, and minimizing consumers’ skepticism about the company’s motivation when it is carrying out social responsibility. Based on this, advocacy advertising technically falls into the category of

institutionalized CSR programs, since the strategy is more “non-economic-centered” and used to create attitudinal influence.

Regardless of the theoretical differences, corporates’ making efforts on CSR programs aims to gain positive influence and benefits in practice. Scholars (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Ellen et al., 2000; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) have pointed out that consumers demonstrate greater support for companies that tend to be more socially and environmentally responsible. If applied properly, CSR can also help attract and retain high-quality employees, and even rescue a company recovery from a market crisis (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Turban & Greening, 1997).

Stakeholder Theory

One compelling explanation why firms are motivated to invest in CSR programs comes from the domain of stakeholder theory (Argandoña, 1998; Freeman, 1984; Harvey & Schaefer, 2001; Post, 2003). Stakeholder theory suggests that an organization’s survival and success is contingent on satisfying both its economic and non-economic objectives by meeting the needs of its various stakeholders (Pirsch et al., 2007). Stakeholder theory and CSR are linked together through the interrelationship between social disclosure and social and economic performance, which is made up of stakeholder power, the firm’s strategic posture, and the company’s past and present economic performance (Ullmann, 1985). This link argues that firms make decisions based on the “intrinsic justice of stakeholder claims on the firm” (Jones, 1994, p. 100), the moral legitimacy of the stakeholders’ claims, stakeholders’ power to influence the firm, the urgency of the stakeholders’ issues (Mitchell et al., 1997), and the organization’s life cycle, since different stakeholders are increasingly relevant at different times (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001).

Further, stakeholder theory suggests that corporations are motivated to broaden their objectives to include other goals in addition to profit maximization. Based on this theory, many

companies embrace CSR programs as a way to promote socially responsible actions and policies and effectively respond to stakeholder demands (Maignan & Farrell, 2004). Motivation for satisfying stakeholder demands stem from the fact that addressing stakeholder needs can be correlated with a firm's survival, economic well-being, competitive advantage, and the development of trust and loyalty among its targeted customers (Mitchell et al., 1997). In summary, ample evidence supports the idea that companies that invest in CSR will achieve positive benefits across all stakeholder groups.

Accordingly, the reasons why corporations take the risks associated with advocacy advertising, whether they do so in order to defend themselves after a crisis or to carry out their social responsibilities, can be observed by researchers. To this end, research is needed to explore what makes advocacy advertising successful. Can most advocacy advertisements successfully sway public opinions and attitudes? And, how should companies measure the effectiveness of advocacy advertising?

Previous Examples of Advocacy Advertising and Measurement

Advocacy advertising first appeared in American newspapers and magazines during the 1930s (Burgoon et al., 1995). Scholars (Fox, 1986; Waltzer, 1988 and Salmon et al. 1985) found these early advocacy advertisements made by corporations mostly aimed to defend companies from criticism and attack or were highly restricted to the area of their own industry. During the era of less rich media choices, AT&T conducted advocacy advertising that promoted the need for a regulated, monopolistic, nationwide telephone network. Later on, a few corporations such as Warner, Swasey, and Mobil Oil routinely employed advocacy advertising over a long period of time (Cutler & Muehling, 1989). In 1996, Philip Morris launched an extensive campaign that emphasized the dangers of youth smoking and promoted the company's youth access prevention

program. This campaign was part of the tobacco company's efforts to repair its damaged public image and credibility by widely publicizing the company's position opposition to youth smoking (Harben & Kim, 2008). At the beginning of the 21st century, Anheuser-Busch initiated a long-running advocacy ad campaign with its "Drink Responsibly" slogan. The campaign included a variety of stories and scenarios depicting the importance of using a designated driver to avoid driving drunk. In this example, the company not only looks good for promoting a cause related to its products; it also fends off attacks from critics who blame alcohol makers and providers for drunk driving accidents. A number of car insurance providers, large and small, have used a similar strategy to show support for safe driving, which is a financial benefit for them since it minimizes payouts. Small businesses uncover areas of vulnerability to criticism and try to take similar proactive steps to show concern for the public.

These examples are all connected to the explicit goals of the corporations' own industries. Some of the ads (such as Budweiser's) were successful, while others (like Mobil Oil's) failed to change consumers' attitudes toward the companies. Based on these varied results, it is necessary to think deeply about what should be taken into consideration when corporations want to issue an advocacy ad campaign. According to Fox (1986), before advocacy advertisers develop plans for issuing advertisements, they are primarily concerned with source credibility, message content and structure, as well as media and target audience. Source credibility is investigated the most, as audiences are likely to become skeptical when they observe that an industry is defending its own self-interests using its own sources. Compared to ordinary non-institutional/commercial advertisements, advocacy advertising message content needs to be more accurate, believable and trustworthy when it is defending corporations from criticism related to controversial issues (Fox, 1986). However, in more recent cases (e.g. Audi's Daughter and Toyota's One Team) in order to

avoid more controversies, advocacy messages are becoming implicit, especially when they refer to a value or ideology.

Besides the change in the ways that advocacy content is presented, media selection also changes to be more multiple. Today's diversity of media has opened up a broader range of possibilities for advocacy advertising; it has become easier for corporations to show their view or stance toward public issues in a public space.

Methods for measuring advertisements' effectiveness have also evolved over the past several decades. One measure discussed by Fox (1986) has focused on the audience's awareness, recall, recognition, source identification, knowledge, and attitudes after being exposed to specific print advocacy ads. Since this research, among a host of studies on ads effectiveness regardless of varied content and medium, attitude consistently serve as an important indicator (e.g. Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Vakratsas & Ambler; 1999; Wang & Sun, 2010). Investigating the intimate relationship between attitude and ad effectiveness of all kinds of advertising, Mehta (2000) found that people with a more favorable attitude toward advertising are more likely to be persuaded by advertising, which represents a more effective persuasive communication.

The current research hereby adapts attitude as a tool to measure the effectiveness of advocacy advertising. This focus is based on the premise that when corporations take a stance on contentious issues or get engaged in CSR programs, they are aiming to influence audience attitudes, rather than to produce a behavioral impact (Pirsch et al., 2007).

Audience Sentiment as a Measure of Attitudinal Impact

Attitude is the psychological likelihood that is demonstrated by assessing a particular object with favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Emanating from beliefs, attitudes operate at different levels of cognitive abstraction. Research suggests that people's beliefs about

advertising are antecedents of attitudes toward advertising (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996; Pollay & Mittal, 1993). As summative evaluations of objects, consumers' attitudes toward product-centric commercial advertising, are a reflection of liking or disliking the products, brands and ads (Wang & Sun, 2010). In the case of advocacy advertising, consumers not only respond to brands themselves, but also the stance or advocacy taken by the corporation, as well as the controversial content featured in the advertisements.

Traditionally, methods measuring attitude used a Likert scale or neuroscientific technique. Rather than a psychological perspective, the current research introduces an approach which analyzes people's attitudes from written language — audience sentiment analysis. This approach is based on taking social media as the source and medium.

Referring attitudes from people's words online is becoming a trend since Social media outlets represent a large virtual space where people around the world can express and share individual opinions. Unprecedented in human history, we now have a huge volume of opinionated data recorded in digital form, which can be widely used for analysis in business and social sciences. Moreover, social media is undoubtedly penetrating many aspects of our life, with significant implications for advertising and communication alike. As consumers react to advertisements by generating their own content on social networks, with browsing footprints including reviews, posts, likes, and also ratings, an extremely useful and unstructured data pool is forged. Scholars (Neri et al. 2012) point out that under the help of data gathered online in a nonintrusive way, brands can indicate the demand trends accordingly; being friendly and interactive presence on a social network can greatly improve brand image. In other words, referring back to social media activities is a good method for measuring customers' sentiment toward an advertising campaign. By keeping track of audience sentiment towards brands, products and ads, researchers can uncover the impact

of campaigns and effectiveness of advertisements, sometimes can also identify and engage the top influencers who are most relevant.

Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis (SA) is a field that analyzes people's opinions, sentiment, attitudes, evaluations, and emotions from written text (Liu, 2012). It is one of the most active research areas in natural language processing (NLP) and is also widely studied in data mining, Web mining, and text mining. It applies computational linguistics to identify text sentiment, typically as positive, neutral, or negative. SA is also known in the text mining literature as emotional polarity analysis (EPA), opinion mining, review mining, or appraisal extraction (Zagal, Tomuro, & Shepitsen, 2012). Specifically, SA techniques have been broadly utilized in applications such as extracting suggestions from consumers' product reviews (e.g., Vishwanath & Aishwarya, 2011), classifying consumers' positive and negative product reviews (e.g., Turney, 2002), tracking sentiment trends in online discussion boards (e.g., Tong, 2001), detecting Internet hot spots (e.g., Li & Wu, 2010), tracking political opinions (e.g., Thomas, Pang, & Lee, 2006), determining consumers' feedback of online advertising campaigns (e.g., Qiu et al., 2010), tracking emotions in emails (Mohammad, 2012), predicting stock market movements (e.g., Wong, Xia, Xu, Wu, & Li, 2008), and differentiating between informative and emotional social media content (e.g., Denecke & Nejdi, 2009). The literature suggests that most SA applications might be classified into four distinct categories: product reviews, movie reviews, political orientation extraction, and stock market predictions (Mostafa, 2013). In this paper, the SA technique is specifically used in "ad reviews." It applies a machine-learning algorithm to arrive at positive/negative/neutral scores that represent the audience sentiment scores.

In summary, audience sentiment analysis, as an approach to detect consumers' attitudes, is helpful in the evaluation of ad effectiveness. In the current research, the strategy of advocacy advertising is measured through this particular analytic to see whether it is successfully accepted by viewers.

Chapter 3: Hypotheses

As stated, social media affords more opportunities for corporations to demonstrate their views or engage with public issues. However, recently corporations have started to take a stance in a more implicit way to avoid extreme contention, such as 84 Lumber's advertisement in 2017 saying no words about ideology or political policy, but viewers could see it was pointing to political conflicts between Mexico and America. Implicit or explicit advocacy advertising might matter in the forms of this particular advertising.

Based on the literature of CSR and stakeholder theory which explain the mechanism of corporations building an image of a responsibility, a hypothesis can be made that institutional ads are supposed to result in positive audience sentiments. Since advocacy ads feature controversial issues and values, their online feedback or audience's interaction is hypothesized to be more intense than the feedback elicited by non-political ads. More specifically, the following hypothesis are posited in this study:

Hypothesis 1)

Audience interaction on social media will be higher in response to advocacy ads than in response to commercial ads.

Hypothesis 2)

Audience sentiments on social media in response to institutional ads will be mostly positive.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The study aims to investigate the two hypotheses centering on advocacy advertisements. Besides the audience sentiment as a measure to see the advocacy ads effectiveness, audience interactions are also identified to compare the online response between recent advocacy ads and traditional product-centric commercial ads. For audience sentiment, the analysis is made within institutional ads: advocacy ads and imagery ads.

Sampling Frame: The Ads

The current study's ad sampling frame consisted of all Super Bowl commercials aired between the years 2010 and 2018. The ads aired during the nine years were obtained online from YouTube or a brand's official Webpage or YouTube account. There were 427 Super Bowl advertisements in total, 31 of which were identified as institutional ads, meaning their content was not commercial-centered, while 396 out of 427 were identified as commercial ads. Table 1 lists all of the institutional ads identified.

Table 1: Institutional Ads

	Year	Brand Name	Ads Name	Ads Theme		
1	2010	Audi	Green Police	Emission and Eco-friendly	explicit	Imagery
2	2011	Motorola	Empower the People	Democracy	implicit	Advocacy
3	2012	Budweiser	Eternal Optimism	End of Prohibition	implicit	Advocacy
4	2013	Jeep	Whole Again	Supporting Nation's Hero	explicit	Imagery
5		Coca-Cola	It's Beautiful	Diversity	implicit	Advocacy
6		Axe Peace	Love Not War	Anti-War	explicit	Imagery
7	2014	Honda	Safety	Driving Safe	explicit	Advocacy
8		Chevrolet	Life	American Cancer Day	explicit	Imagery
9		T-Mobile	No Contract	Whale Protection	implicit	Imagery
10		Always	Like a girl	Feminism	explicit	Advocacy
11		Microsoft	Braylon	Disabilities	implicit	Imagery
12	2015	Toyota	How great I am	Disabilities	implicit	Imagery
13		Mophie	All Powerless	Racism	implicit	Advocacy
14		T- mobile	One-Upped	Data Privacy	explicit	Advocacy
15		BMW Mini	Defy Labels	Equality	implicit	Advocacy
16	2016	Budweiser	Give a Damn	Drunken Driving	explicit	Advocacy
17		Colgate	Water Counts	Water Saving	explicit	Advocacy
18		Audi	Daughter	Women Equity	implicit	Advocacy
19		Budweiser	Born the Hard Way	Immigration	implicit	Advocacy
20	2017	Airbnb	We Accept	Diversity	explicit	Advocacy
21		Google	Google Home	Diversity	implicit	Advocacy
22		84 lumber	The Journey Begins	Immigration	implicit	Advocacy
23		Budweiser	Stand by You	Disaster Relief	explicit	Imagery
24		Toyota	Good Odds	Making Movement	explicit	Imagery
25		Verizon	Answering the Call	Tributes to 911 First Responders	explicit	Imagery
26		Hyundai	Hope Detector	Hyundai Donating Money	explicit	Imagery
27	2018	Toyota	One Team	Religion Diversity	implicit	Advocacy
28		Ram	Built to Serve	Belief in a Life of Serving Others	explicit	Imagery
29		T mobile	Little Ones	Equality	explicit	Advocacy
30		Groupon	Who Wouldn't	Ask Support for Local Business	explicit	Advocacy
31		Natural Light	College Student Loan	Donation	explicit	Imagery

Content Analysis Procedure: The Ads

Conceptual Definition

Commercial advertising: involves the direct promotion of a firm's goods/services to create market and increase sales, with content that is product-centered (e.g. Fombrun, 1996).

Institutional advertising: aims to create a favorable environment in which to function for the firm, with content not featuring the firm's product. This category includes imagery advertising and advocacy advertising (e.g. Schumann et al., 1991).

Imagery advertising: shows a firm doing good that is beneficial to society (Seith, 1979).

Advocacy advertising: shows a firm's standpoints on public/controversial issues (Seith, 1988).

Operational Definition

Commercial and institutional ads are easily identified based on their conceptual definitions. Institutional ads are further identifiable depending on whether the ad simply showcases good work done for the public good or identifies an advocacy standpoint or action. Advocacy ads can be further categorized as either implicit or explicit in their message strategy. "Implicit" means that the ad content expresses the firms' actions or views, but does not directly state that stance within the ad. "Explicit" means the actions or views are stated in a straightforward way: spoken out loud by the narrators or displayed through words on the screen. Based on these distinctions, the sample (N = 31) was categorized into four categories with two types of institutional ads (imagery vs. advocacy) and two ways in which the content is presented (implicit vs. explicit). Table 2 shows the categorization.

Table 2: Institutional Ads Categorization

	Content Presented Implicitly	Content Presented Explicitly
Imagery Ads	T mobile: Whale Protection Microsoft: Helping Disabilities Toyota: Empowering Disabilities	Audi: Eco-Friendly Jeep: Supporting Nation's Hero Axe Peace: Love not War Chevrolet: American Cancer Day Budweiser: Disaster Relief Toyota: Making Movements Verizon: Tributes Hyundai: Donation Ram: Belief in Serving Natural Light: College Student Loan
Total: 13/31	3	10
Advocacy Ads	Motorola: Democracy Budweiser: End of Prohibition Coca-Cola: Diversity Mophie: Racism BMW Mini: Equality Audi: Women Equity Budweiser: Immigration 84 Lumber: Immigration Toyota: Religion Diversity Google: Diversity	Honda: Driving Safe Always: Feminism T mobile: Data Privacy Budweiser: Drunken Driving Colgate: Saving Water Airbnb: Diversity T mobile: Equality Groupon: Support Local Business
Total: 18/31	10	8

Audience Interaction: Response to the Ads

Audience interaction is defined as the overall likes, dislikes, shares and comments for ads. These responses are tangible measures of how audience members take action online to get engaged and interact with the ads. The data on views, likes, dislikes, shares and comments for all the ads were collected from the time the ads were posted online to the time of 12:00 am, April 28th, 2018. A chi-square test was used to identify differences in audience interaction between advocacy ads and commercial ads. Since there were 18 advocacy ads, 18 out of 396 commercial ads were randomly chosen to conduct the chi-square test.

Sentiment Analysis Procedure

First, a text mining programming language, Python, was used to grab all online comments on YouTube API related to each advertisement. The comments were grabbed on April 28th, 2018. The study then leveraged a widely used open source tool, Vader, as the primary tool for sentiment analysis. Vader utilizes a lexicon-based method and was trained over thousands of labeled data, which produces the necessary power to serve the study's purpose. A two-step approach for analyzing the sentiments of the comments was conducted. First, the Vader classifier examined all comments in the target ads (31 ads). Second, the Vader classifier filtered out those comments that were labeled with a small score between ± 0.05 . Step two was necessary for minimizing the uncertainty of sentiment aggregation across the entire set of video comments. The final aggregated sentiments are shown in the results.

Chapter 5: Results

Audience Interaction

The table below shows the interactions of audiences on YouTube with these specific categories of ads.

Table 3: Audience Interaction

	Views	Likes	Dislikes	Shares	Comments
Commercial Ads (N=18)	9,657,819	9,129	2,018	5,302	1,739
Institutional Ads (N=31)	6,706,164	11,902	10,840	9,242	3,343
Imagery Ads (N=13)	4,826,333	10,212	6,568	4,482	2,490
Advocacy Ads (N=18)	8,585,995	13,591	15,112	14,001	4,195

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between audience interaction with advocacy ads (N=18) and with traditional commercial ads (N=18). The relation between these variables was significant, $\chi^2(4) = 19.424$, $p < .01$, so it is concluded that the audience interaction with advocacy ads is significantly more intense compared to traditional commercial ads.

Audience Sentiment

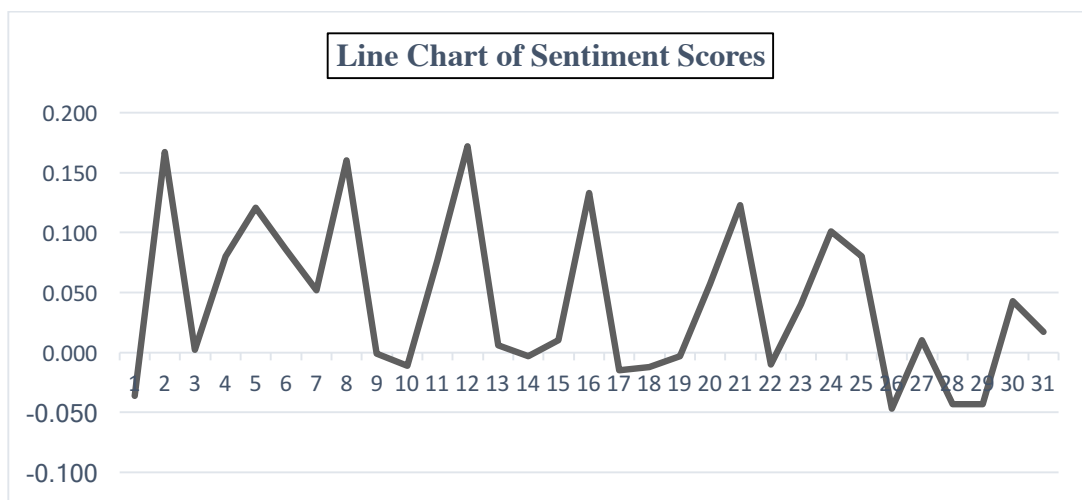
Table 4: Vader Sentiment Score for Institutional Ads

Year	Brand Name	Ads Name	Vader Neutral	Vader Positive	Vader Negative	Vader Score (Pos-Neg)
2010	Audi	Green Police	0.765	0.121	0.157	-0.036
2011	Motorola	Empower the People	0.774	0.188	0.021	0.167
2012	Budweiser	Eternal Optimism	0.732	0.134	0.132	0.002
2013	Jeep	Whole Again	0.756	0.201	0.121	0.08
2014	Coca-Cola	It's Beautiful	0.763	0.171	0.050	0.121
	Axe Peace	Love Not War	0.739	0.198	0.112	0.086
	Honda	Safety	0.778	0.161	0.109	0.052
	Chevrolet	Life	0.798	0.169	0.009	0.16
	T-Mobile	No Contract	0.664	0.131	0.132	-0.001
2015	Always	Like a girl	0.625	0.141	0.152	-0.011
	Microsoft	Braylon	0.775	0.135	0.058	0.077
	Toyota	How great I am	0.746	0.205	0.033	0.172
	Mophie	All powerless	0.714	0.145	0.139	0.006
	T- mobile	One-Upped	0.726	0.158	0.161	-0.003
2016	BMW Mini	Defy Labels	0.784	0.128	0.118	0.01
	Budweiser	Give a damn	0.734	0.202	0.069	0.133
	Colgate	Water Counts	0.699	0.178	0.193	-0.015
2017	Audi	Daughter	0.706	0.141	0.153	-0.012
	Budweiser	Born the Hard Way	0.742	0.128	0.131	-0.003
	Airbnb	We Accept	0.744	0.157	0.100	0.057
	Google	Google Home	0.779	0.164	0.041	0.123
	84 lumber	The Journey Begins	0.734	0.128	0.138	-0.010
2018	Budweiser	Stand by You	0.756	0.191	0.151	0.04
	Toyota	Good Odds	0.674	0.202	0.101	0.101
	Verizon	Answering the Call	0.801	0.089	0.009	0.08
	Hyundai	Hope Detector	0.735	0.051	0.098	-0.047
	Toyota	One Team	0.788	0.134	0.124	0.01
	Ram	Built to serve	0.734	0.135	0.178	-0.043
	T-Mobile	Little Ones	0.756	0.112	0.155	-0.043
	Groupon	Who Wouldn't	0.726	0.152	0.109	0.043
	Natural Light	College Student Loan	0.692	0.116	0.099	0.017
N = 31						

After all the comments of these institutional ads were grabbed, they were measured through the Vader analytics. In practice, besides ordinary negative words in the database like “bad, worst, disgusting, puke”, “propaganda, unrelated, ashamed after watching this, :(” and other neutral word were complementarily added in order to fit the context. Positive words were also processed this way. The results can be clearly seen from Table 4 that a Vader neutral, positive and negative are given to each individual ad. The ultimate Vader scores are assigned by subtracting positive score to negative, with positive Vader scores showing positive sentiment and negative showing negative sentiment.

In summary, the mean sentiment score of institutional ads is 0.042, the maximum is 0.172 which is “How great I am” made by Toyota in 2015, and the minimum is -0.047 made by Hyundai in 2018 targeting Hyundai’s role as a “Hope Detector” by donating money and applying charity. There are 11 ads in total getting a negative sentiment score, and 20 gain positive sentiment. The line chart helps clarify the distribution.

Figure 1:



When it comes to the way of how ad content is presented (implicitly/explicitly), the following table shows the distinction between sentiment scores of advocacy and imagery ads.

Table 5: Sentiment Score of Categorized Institutional Ads

	Content Presented Implicitly	Sentiment Score	Content Presented Explicitly	Sentiment Score
Imagery Ads	T mobile: Whale Protection	-0.001	Audi: Eco-Friendly	-0.036
	Microsoft: Help Disabilities	0.077	Jeep: Supporting Nation's Hero	0.08
	Toyota: Empower Disabilities	0.172	Axe Peace: Love not War	0.086
			Chevrolet: American Cancer Day	0.16
			Budweiser: Disaster Relief	0.04
			Toyota: Making Movements	0.101
			Verizon: Tributes	0.08
			Hyundai: Donation	-0.047
			Ram: Belief in Serving	-0.043
			Natural Light: College Student Loan	0.017
Total: 13/31	3	0.083	10	0.044
Advocacy Ads	Motorola: Democracy	0.167	Honda: Driving Safe	0.052
	Budweiser: End of Prohibition	0.002	Always: Feminism	-0.011
	Coca-Cola: Diversity	0.121	T mobile: Data Privacy	-0.003
	Mophie: Racism	0.006	Budweiser: Drunken Driving	0.133
	BMW Mini: Equality	0.01	Colgate: Saving Water	-0.015
	Audi: Women Equity	-0.012	Airbnb: Diversity	0.058
	Budweiser: Immigration	-0.003	T mobile: Equality	-0.043
	84 Lumber: Immigration	-0.01	Groupon: Support Local Business	0.043
	Toyota: Religion Diversity	0.01		
	Google: Diversity	0.123		
Total: 18/31	10	0.041	8	0.027

From the table, all four categories of ads gain positive sentiment scores. Specifically, implicit imagery ads demonstrated the highest with 0.08, followed by explicit imagery ads (0.044), implicit advocacy ads (0.041) and finally, 0.027 for explicit advocacy ads. Imagery ads generally has higher score than advocacy ads.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Limitation

This study investigated two main hypotheses, one targeting the comparison of audience interactions between advocacy ads and commercial ads, and the other focusing on the sentiment toward institutional ads, including imagery ads as well as controversial advocacy-based advertisements.

Although advocacy advertising is not a standard strategy, it has emerged frequently in recent years. It turns out that this strategy – showing the brands' stands in ads – does elicit more intense interactions among online audience than traditional commercial ads, which verify the first research hypothesis. Due to the change that corporates embrace this particular advertising strategy more voluntary than usual, it makes sense to understand if it works effectively. Previous descriptions of ST and CSR indicate that corporations engage in public issues or show their advocacy to benefit their reputations. While there are risks in negative feedback from opponents who disagree with the stand taken by the brands, corporations are still able to show their duty in the social-political environment. In the current research, consistent with the theoretical framework, sentiment analysis indicates that institutional ads, including imagery and advocacy ads, do generate positive sentiments among viewers. From this, hypothesis 2 is supported by the sentiment scores reported. To summarize, advocacy ads elicit more contention and audience interaction than traditional product-centric commercials.

To further explicate the effectiveness of the two types of institutional ads, results show that attitudinal reactions are different when non-commercial ads present their ad content implicitly and explicitly. As shown in Table 5, when advocacy ads present their content explicitly, their sentiment score is the lowest among the four categories examined (implicit/explicit imagery ads and implicit/explicit advocacy ads). This finding suggests that audiences find it difficult to fully accept

when brands take a clear stance on public issues, or call too much attention to their views. For example, when Colgate advertised its advocacy through the slogan “Every drop of water counts”, audiences did not think it was seriously appealing to eco-friendly behaviors. Instead, they commented that the ad itself may be wasting water when the video was being produced. For instance, there are comments describing the action as “hypocritical”. On the other side, imagery ads perform better than advocacy in general, but explicit imagery ads also get lower sentiment scores than implicit ones. Hyundai’s imagery ads choosing to highlight the company’s good works by explicitly saying “we donate money to help cancer patients” elicited critical comments like “Good people do not brag about how good they are.” Being too explicit and direct may cause reactance and resistance in persuasion (e.g. Brehm, 1966; Buller, Borland, & Burgoon, 1998; Burgoon, Alvaro, Grandpre, & Voulodakis, 2002; Ringold, 2002).

According to the lower scores and increased negative feedback toward ads that explicitly advertise a company’s commitment to social goods, it seems that an implicit approach would be safer and more effective when corporates are doing imagery and advocacy advertising. However, corporates still need to be cautious when presenting advocacy-based messages – implicit expression does not necessarily turn out to be effective. For instance, Audi’s implicit connection to feminism and cars generated negative sentiments as viewers perceive the connection as to firm. Customers failed to see a relationship between cars and women rights, making Audi’s act of being politically correct appear forced or out of place. The ad effectiveness is hereby far from satisfactory. In comparison, Airbnb’s promoting diversity and anti-discrimination gets recognition by implicitly changing people’s faces into different races, showing their determination to accept all kinds of people around the world. Above all, advocacy ads could be an effective strategy. That said, when

stepping into controversial public issues, corporates have to think over how to address their stands, express their ideas and connect the products with their advocacy.

As with all research, this research has several limitations. First, it has limitations in the sampling and algorithm used for the sentiment analysis. That is, Super Bowl ads from the past eight years does not provide a comprehensive sample in terms of the audience scope, since some people never watch football games. Further, sentiment analysis remains an emerging technique and is not yet mature enough to account for the complexities of natural language processing. Euphemism and inaccurate description are hard to measure in simple words classification. For instance, comments such as “That’s why I buy other cars” posted in response to the Audi commercials, cannot be recognized by the current training data. Such comments fail to be judged as negative since they are using sarcasm.

This research proposed a specific approach to measuring audience feedback on institutional ads, and explored the theoretical mechanism behind action of conducting advocacy-based advertising. For future studies, more specified strategies should be addressed on advocacy advertising. For example, strategies such as how to effectively connect the brand and advocacy, as well as what advocacy is more acceptable to its target audience. In today’s era of social media, customers connect with brands through a broader range of interactive media. Thus, corporates can utilize and reflect on the feedback of their ads through online data in order to successfully establish a socially responsible brand image.

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